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agement of detail than is shown here. It needs a Wells, or at least a Jules Verne, to "get away with it." At his most fantastic Wells never loses touch with real humanity, and the French master was always interesting. There may, however, be some interest for easily satisfied readers in the "thrills" of this. When the hero, the villains, the old millionaire and an assortment of Chinese and other retainers settle down to the business of chasing each other around the labyrinthine passages of the palace, 2,000 feet up, there is at least "something doing."

The leading villain is not very efficient except in his death scene. There he outdoes himself, as he is capable of making quite a nice little speech after he has taken a dose of prussic acid. That shows truly astonishing vitality. The rest of the caste are all stock characters. But really some one ought to have explained to the author that the language of Brazil is not Spanish.

THE BRACEGIRDLE. By Burris Jenkins. J. B. Lippincott Company.

THERE is plenty of room for the good, old fashioned, semi-historical, swashbuckling romance, especially when it is pretty well done. Mr. Jenkins has already made something of a name for himself in this field, and should gain a wider public with this story. This time he ventures into the London and England of the era of William of Orange—something of a transitional epoch between the Puritan times and the more settled sedateness of the later years of that century. His local color and atmosphere are laid on rather thickly, but they will do well enough, and no one can take exception to the activity of his gallants and his theatrical folk with their army of retainers.

The hero bursts obstreperously into the story on the first page, swinging a "gnarled and knotted blackthorn," with which he joyously breaks a number of heads in the attempt to rescue the Bracegirdle from what appears to be a riot. That sets a rapid pace, but the going continues good right up to the end. The lady is multifariously pursued by kidnapers, suitors, &c.; there is a mysterious baby; there is even a rescue of royalty, and of course the heroine is unjustly suspected. Equally, of course, it ends as all such romances should.

Mr. Jenkins's style is a little above the average and has occasionally a real felicity. It is well adapted to the needs of such fiction. The underlying psychology of the whole, however, is rather that of to-day than of the date of the story—not very markedly so, but enough to be noticeable.

The book has a sound value as a picture of the world of the theater of that period. As Mr. Jenkins asserts in an explanatory note, there is nothing in it that is inconsistent with the recorded history of the actual Mistress Bracegirdle and the Drury Lane players, though he has naturally found it necessary to indulge in some rearrangement of his data. The book gives a picturesque reproduction of that portion of the life of the time.

THE OUTCAST. By Selma Lagerlof. Translated by W. Worster. Doubleday, Page & Co.

IN these days, when unswerving realism is the dominant note in fiction, it is refreshing to read a novel in which the realistic is artistically tempered by the romantic or even by the unreal. "The Saga of Gosta Berling," for which Selma Lagerlof first won distinction, is a skillful blend of commonplace with the legendary and the supernatural; and those who enjoyed the author's earlier work will be delighted to find much of the same quality in her latest story, "The Outcast."

This novel has, indeed, many realistic elements, yet is lifted above realism by its naive beauty of style, by its perception of the grandeur hidden in simple scenes and simple men, and by an imaginative enthusiasm that constantly brings one to the threshold of hidden forces, of trolls and the shades of the dead and the unseen gnomes that hold the reins of human character. In a way there is something of Hawthorne in Selma Lagerlof, for, like Hawthorne, she gives us the sense of shadowy powers beyond us, of the mysterious, the eerie and the unknown; and in her hands the barest and most unillumined facts take on a glamour and the prosaic becomes lyrical and fraught with meaning.

The bleak western coast of Sweden forms the setting for the story, and the characters are the simple peasants of the farms and villages. Among them comes Sven Elversson, who, like the heroine of "The Scarlet Letter," is marked with the brand of sin; but his offense is a much less common one than here; it is the nameless crime of having tasted human flesh. It does not matter that the deed was committed in a time of starvation during an Arctic cruise; it does not matter that the victim

Selma Lagerlof.

had first died by his own hand—the tale of Elversson's guilt spreads like fire, and there are none who are willing to forgive the offender or to treat him as an equal. Accordingly, he walks among them as an outcast—and a most unusual outcast, indeed! He constantly performs acts of charity, only to be rewarded by being struck in the face; he constantly wears a sad and resigned smile, like one that is undergoing martyrdom; and wherever he goes he is a messenger of good, as if he would atone to the living for an outrage committed against the dead.

But the living will not accept his atonement. Though he behave like a saint they cannot but despise him and perhaps feel a superstitious fear of him; they are blinded by prejudice because they believe him to be evil; and reason cannot overcome their emotional antipathy. In this loathing there is something of a feline quality, and the author vividly impresses its nature upon us by her description of a cat observed by certain of her characters:

"As they watched it there seemed to be something uncanny about the way its limbs moved under the soft skin. It was not only that it moved so silently, or that its green slits of eyes, as it looked at them, were so veiled and without expression. The thing was hateful because it was so smooth and soft and pleasant looking, while all the time it thought of nothing but stealing and killing.

"And as they looked the cat seemed to grow and stretch itself and expand until it rose so high as to shut out sight of the wall of hills. And as the creature grew it purred and hummed and made all manner of playful, easy movements—and the horror of it increased.

"And they saw that the beast was the loathing that had arisen about them—the loathing that was to grow till it spread over all the plain."

The loathing does indeed grow and grow—yet Elversson in the end emerges triumphant. But before the climax is reached we lose sight of the protagonist for whole chapters at a time, for the author's method of story telling is that of the saga rather than of the unified novel, and she jogs along at a leisurely pace, bringing in much material that has little to do with the central theme. We are told much of a certain Stigrun, a young woman in love with Elversson and unhappily wedded to a pastor; we are introduced to Lotta Hedman, a girl who sees visions which the author half persuades us are real; and in connection with these visions we are given hints of spirits that mold human actions and of an ancestral curse that is lifted in the end as the reward of altruism. Yet though the supernatural elements are well defined they are never so definite but that they can be attributed to hallucinations; and though they have undoubted meaning their significance is left vague and cloudlike, so that one may either accept it or attribute it to one's own imagination. For example, one of the characters thinks he sees a decayed old gatepost, but the next moment observes that it is gone; and we are not certain whether it is an actual gatepost that has crumbled, or the man's own "violent, reckless, savage nature, with its supports of inherited habit and ingrown prejudice."

Whatever be the idea the author intends to convey, it is certain that at the end of the book much "ingrown prejudice" does crumble. As the wrack of the world war, dozens of corpses of drowned seamen are washed up upon the Swedish coast, and partly because of them, partly because of the share which Elversson takes in rescuing the bodies from the waters, partly because in the clothing of one is found proof that the outcast has never touched human flesh, the people come to realize how insidious and how wrong has been the loathing that has grown up within them. They understand at last that life is more sacred than death; that it is life that deserves their devotion and their homage. But with regard to Elversson the realization comes too late—he is already dying, worn out by the incessant strain he has undergone. Yet though the book ends with his passing we feel that the tragedy has been in his life rather than in his death, for with death comes triumph—the complete conquest of the obstacles that have beset him. As one of the other characters describes it, he has come and gone "as a sign . . . to show how we can find the way out of our misery, if not at once, still within a span of time that human thought can embrace."

THE PRIVET HEDGE. By J. E. Buckrose. George H. Doran Company.

TO J. E. Buckrose the "Privet Hedge" surrounding the house in which dwelt Miss Ethel and Mrs. Bradford is a symbol of the old order in England that was swept away by the social changes wrought by the world war. So long as the hedge stood it appeared to them that something like prewar times would return, particularly in the matter of servants who "knew their place" and did not think it a part of their rights to go out every night to cinemas and what not.

And that is where Caroline came in. For in this tale the old order, as personified by Miss Ethel and Mrs. Bradford, is contrasted with the new, as typified by Caroline. This "young person" had been committed through her childhood to the idea of "going out to service" at the house with the privet hedge, much as royalty is foreordained to a certain kind of marriage. But when the time came Caroline rebelled. She wanted to be a business woman. And her first job was acting as ticket taker of the municipal promenade. But still a trace of the influence of the old order clung to Caroline. This took the form of agreeing to live with Miss Ethel and do the morning and evening household tasks. The privet hedge was still standing.

But Caroline was possessed of the kind of beauty that appeals to a masculine man. And that is why Godfrey Wilson fell in love with her, although he shouldn't, seeing he was engaged to some one else, a some one of his own world and with a comfortable fortune. Love and change have their way in this world, however, and they brought grief and disaster to Godfrey's fiancee and to Miss Ethel and her sister. The privet hedge was cut down.

This charming tale is told with a singular grace, with quiet humor, with rich observation of character, bits of what in the art world are called "marine painting," and moving passion. Miss Ethel and Caroline are exquisite studies of character, each in her own way pulsing with human hopes and fears, the elder woman a symbol of protest, the younger of welcoming change. They are both pathetic, yet they have that quality of nobility which most of us strive for and so seldom achieve. Which is why we are so gratified when we meet it in fiction, meet it as it is so finely presented to us in these delightful pages.

VAN ZANTEN'S HAPPY DAYS. By Laurids Bruun. Translated by David Pritchard. Alfred A. Knopf.

AS one might expect, when the Scandinavian adventures even to the sunlit South Seas he manages to take along with him something of his northern gloom. This sketch—it can hardly be called a novel—is, indeed, full of the strong warm sunlight of the tropics, but it is a lurid, stormy sun, after all, and it is finally quenched in the unmitigated catastrophe of the end. The Scandinavian is at least a consistent artist, with the courage of his convictions. He is thorough in his tragedy—like the negro widow of the familiar story who demanded black underclothing, remarking, "When ah mou'ns ah *mou'ns!*"

Laurids Bruun is evidently an artist of whom it would be worth while to know more. This tragic idyll is a little masterpiece, its color and richly sensuous quality apparent even through the diluting medium of a translation. As to that, it is mere nearly possible to translate from the Scandinavian languages into English without much loss than in the case of any other group of tongues. Here one feels sure Mr. Pritchard has done a good piece of work.

The story has the effect of being a genuine reminiscence, an idealized record of experience, rather than merely fiction. We are told that Bruun has traveled extensively in the Far East, and it may reasonably be inferred that he is drawing his romantic islands from some concretely visualized model. It is a brilliant and strikingly realistic picture. It is not overidealized. His

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